4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11



*Games.*—They play a kind of *bau* with sixteen holes; they put three small stones in each hole. The boys play a kind of hockey with a wooden ball.

Upon return from war about two out of every three cattle go to the chief; the chief then divides his share of the cattle with his brothers, and a man who has distinguished himself in war is given a reward of cattle by the chief. A man who distinguishes himself in war is also often given a wife without payment.

*Food, etc.*—They eat practically all meat except that of the hyæna. Some young men eat leopard meat to make them fierce in fighting; the meat of a serval cat is not eaten. The women do not eat fowls; some women do not eat sheep and eggs; some eat hippopotamus meat, some not; women do not drink milk, but eat it cooked with food. They have a curious custom of mixing cow's urine with the milk of the cow; the urine is allowed to stand a day or two to increase its flavour; they say it increases the amount of the butter and gives it a nice flavour, and it is moreover supposed to have a medicinal effect. The crested crane (*Balaerica gibbericeps*) is never killed or eaten by these people.

*Medicine, etc.*—They pierce the chest until the lung is reached for chest complaints, and they even sometimes cut a small piece out of the lung through the aperture. They have medicine for wounds and for arrow poison, also for ulcers and for purging, but not for diarrhœa. They also have medicine to avert a threatened miscarriage. They profess to have a certain antidote for snake poison.[1] Venereal disease is practically unknown among the Ja-Luo.

Before going to war they often eat the outer seed case of a certain tree, and this is supposed to ensure their return unwounded; it is called *Ochola*.

*Peace ceremonies.*—They kill a sheep and put part of it into a wooden mortar used for crushing grain, and the representative of each side takes out a piece and gives it to the opposite side. An old man from the side that is beaten will go to the village of the chief of the enemy and proceed to sweep up the cattle boma; this will be accepted as a sign of submission.

*Killing animals for food.*—They kill oxen by sticking a knife into the jugular vein; the head of the beast must be pointed to the west during the operation. Sheep and goats are killed the same way. Fowls are strangled.

*Succession customs, etc.*—When a man dies the property goes to the brother if the children are small; if the eldest son is grown up he takes the property and gives his brothers a share; but a son is not allowed to take the amount paid by anyone who marries one of his sisters; this amount all goes to the father's brother. The brother of the deceased takes the wives, but the eldest son will probably take the youngest wife of his deceased father.

[1] After considerable difficulty I obtained specimens of the plants said to be used as antidotes for snake poison, and Dr. Rendle, of the Botanical Department, British Museum, has kindly identified the plants for me. One plant, named *Phytolacca Abyssinica*, is used internally, an infusion being made from the leaves. The other plant, *Ipomœa palmata*, is used externally, a plaster of the macerated leaves being placed on the wound. I have not been able to discover the physiological action of these plants.

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11



They suffer not infrequently from pneumonia and other affections of the lungs, and their remedy for these maladies is to pierce a hole in the chest, and even to cut out a small piece of the inflamed lung. They have an antidote for snake poison; remedies for diarrhœa, constipation, ulcers; salves for wounds; and even drugs which are taken to avert threatened miscarriage. Venereal disease is practically unknown amongst this people, which, although so indifferent to nudity, is yet too moral to permit sexual intercourse with strangers.

Men and women have the same names. But in many instances,

436. THE GAME OF "BAO," PLAYED ALL OVER EASY CENTRAL AFRICA. (THE PLAYERS HERE ARE TAU SOLDIERS FROM SOUTH CENTRAL AFRICA)

whereas the root of the name is the same, it is preceded by the vowel "O" in the case of a man, and "A" in the case of a woman. For instance, "Opio" is a male name, and "Apio" is a female name.

The games they play are few. There is the well-nigh universal game of little compartments in which seeds or pebbles are put. Boys and young men sometimes play a kind of hockey, knocking about a wooden ball.

After the return from a warlike expedition two out of every three cattle go to the chief, who divides his share with his brothers, and also gives a special reward of cattle to any man who has particularly distinguished himself in war. To this hero a wife is often given for payment.

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11



857 As the child grows older it begins to play by itself.
593 Parents also amuse their children, but because they are generally away from the village, the children must either play with the nurses or by themselves. Before the child has learnt to talk, the play between it and the nurse is that of inducement to laughter or fright. Older children between two and five merely copy what the nurses do. These nurses, who are sometimes the children's own sisters, act as their instructors and demonstrators in the different play activities.

857 *Play activities.* Dolls like those existing in European society are unknown among Luo children. The children
524 play with things they pick up, like stones, leaves—dry or green—and many other natural articles. In short, they adapt their environment to their own needs. They mostly prefer bright objects, and after the end of the day's play they return home with a load of playthings. These they keep in some corner, ready for the next day. Thus the younger children go on day after day bringing in new toys and throwing away the old. As we shall see later, the older children, or nurses, make their own dolls.

857 Once the children can walk and understand other
521 children's language, the older ones may hide, calling for the younger ones to try to find them—a game resembling 'hide and seek'. Some parents maintain that a child
867 of five is able to tell lies merely becuase he or she has had contact with older children already able to tell lies. But the habit of giving wrong interpretations to what they perceive is very common. Thus Otieno, having once suffered from a thorn-prick, mistook any hard object underfoot for a thorn. He was also fond of giving false alarms. I was frequently interrupted by the announcement of his father's return, and these announcements were often untrue.

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11



857 868 and is an imitation taking place even among children who do not see grinding stones in use. It is therefore like a vanishing feature of a culture surviving in the form of children's play activity. Leaves of plants or trees are put into a broken piece of pot (*balatago*) with a little water to represent either meat, fish or green vegetables in the process of being cooked. Small dried branches may be used to represent the fire, but actual fire is not used at this early stage. These are mainly make-believe activities in which the children persuade themselves that they are doing real things.

In the rather advanced activities the younger act as servants to the older children, who send them here and there to fetch the necessary articles and also instruct them to keep the supposed fire burning. Between the ages of six and nine, female children, as I have already mentioned, use real things in imitating the preparation of food. Thus, during the mother's absence nurses and other older children may take corn or flour, water and salt, to be made into porridge (kuon). They may also tear off a portion of fish or meat to be cooked in the play huts, which are generally constructed in some hidden place behind the village. Nevertheless, the vessels used are still merely broken pieces of pottery.

The play shelters themselves are small enclosures made of leafy branches. Having used the huts for several days the children abandon them or set fire to them, and there are occasions when actual houses have been set on fire during the absence of the grown-ups. If this happens, nothing is done to the children, for children are everywhere considered to be 'foolish' and capable of any mischief. [861] [858]

[524] Sometimes millet is boiled in old small tins or broken pots. On the whole, the method of cooking is extremely crude, nevertheless, it is significant in that it shows the

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11



independent progress of the youngsters towards the activities of adult life. At times they are so proud of their successes that they even show their prepared food to their parents; and parents are generally pleased to taste what their children have prepared, even though the articles may not be well cooked. 857 868

Female children may also imitate activities involving the care of babies. They make a mould of a baby and a nurse-child, using leaves and some rags for bedding and clothes. The mould-child may be given to one of the younger children, who carries it and so learns how to look after babies. Sometimes maize cobs are used instead of the moulded clay. Children may also imitate the death of a child, and all the children in the group join in the mourning. [524]

Female children are very fond of singing the songs they hear older children sing at festivals. At this age they have a greater inclination to sing than male children, and their songs sometimes help them to quiet crying babies. [533]

As a pastime the nurses engage in 'Kora', a game played with small smooth bits of stone or rounded pieces of broken pottery. This game has a series of rules which every player must observe. Younger children imitate the older ones but are not very successful because their minds and muscles are as yet immature, and they lack the steadiness and precision required for the game. It is interesting to watch, and girls as old as even twelve years take an active part in it. The stones are collected in the palm, then thrown into the air while the back of the hand is turned to receive them, the object of the game being that more than one of the stones thrown into the air must come to rest on the back of the hand. Then by a series of trials one stone is thrown into the air while another on the ground is picked up in time to receive also the stone which has been thrown up. This is 857 524

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11



857 repeated until all the fallen stones have been collected,
524 when it is considered that the game is won. The rules are, however, more complicated than this brief sketch has made them appear.

### Discipline

857 During the period between two and six years, the
865 children have a tendency to play with their friends until late in the evening. The playground may be quite removed from the house; hence parents often have to take strict action to keep their children within the bounds of their homesteads. When they are disobedient, the
[864] normal disciplinary action is whipping. At this age female children are instructed to sit with their knees together. If one of them sits carelessly she is either warned or whipped. Among her duties are the fetching of firewood or dishes for food, and if she refuses to fetch firewood for anyone in the village she may be whipped.
[868] She cannot, of course, be asked to bring fire from a neighbouring home, or to light it, because she lacks the experience necessary for this task. Crying without a cause is sternly repressed and if it is persisted in it earns the child a whipping.

855 *Training in decency.* Luo children from two years up-
863 wards are greatly neglected so far as clothes, washing, and training in decency are concerned. Hence the general appearance of these children is that of dirty little creatures whose clothes are stained with the soil in which they play. Some mothers admit that they fail to wash their children for as long as three days. Other mothers do not worry at all, assuming that their children will go with the older children to wash themselves.

863 Children old enough to walk about are strictly instructed not to empty their bowels inside the home but in front of the house beyond the enclosure. Once shown

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11



going age have little to do beyond playing in gangs. It is thus very common to come across gangs of male children engaged in social games. Because girls are occupied with their household duties it is much easier for boys of this age to go to school, causing less family disruption.

With her time for play diminishing, the young girl struggles between work given by her mother and the powerful attraction of the play groups from which her domestic duties tend to exclude her. Therefore if she is to discharge her traditional task of education, a mother must labour to keep her daughter from associating with these groups.

The girls' early training enables them to take on family duties at which boys of the same age would fail, for in their training for responsibility the girls of this age[1] are far in advance of their male counterpart. But the limited time in which the training must be completed has the effect of overloading a girl's school-going period.

*The play groups*. The activities carried on by girls from six to eleven years old are a continuation of those of the previous age group from two to five, but the play becomes more mature and better organized. The older girl assumes the role of organizer of the play activities of her younger sisters. Thus the activities become more complex and besides those involving the imitation of grinding corn, other articles of food appear such as meat, fish, and leaves to represent vegetables.

During my observations I noticed a tendency amongst young girls at play to give female names to their dolls, which probably indicates that they identify the dolls with themselves. Thus, when I suggested male names for the dolls, they were rejected. In assuming the role of the doll's mother it again seems clear that the girl identifies herself with her own mother.

Girls may also be found playing the part of a mother

[1] i.e. From six to eleven years old. – ANALYST]